

Upper Yuba River Studies Program Oakland Public Meeting

September 14, 1999
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Transcript of Question and Response Session

Participants: Terry Mills – CALFED

Dave Munro – Skippers Cove Marina

Shawn Garvey – South Yuba River Citizens League

Kevin Goishi – Pacific Gas & Electric

Mike Fitzwater- California Sport Fishing Protection Alliance

Charlie Alpers – U.S. Geological Survey

Julie Tupper – U.S. Forest Service

Tim Feller – Citizens Allied Against Lake Englebright Destruction

Bonnie Nixon – Public Affairs Management -- Meeting Facilitator

QUESTION: Why not a fish hatchery below the dam and save the hydroelectric benefits the dam provides? To replace this power source would require 5,400,000 gallons of oil per year.

ANSWER: There are two powerhouses at the base of Englebright Dam that will be directly affected by decisions made in this process. Narrows I is about a 10 megawatt powerhouse and Narrows II is about a 55 megawatt powerhouse. In some of the options being considered both of those powerhouses could be taken out of service and the generation they currently provide is going to have to be replaced from somewhere else.

Given the state of technology and the state of available capacity in California today, it is likely that replacement power will come from a gas fired generation source. So it is true that, that the replacement will be fossil fired and it is probably not fuel that will be replaced.

QUESTION: If Englebright is removed, what is the affect on electrical output upriver due to new requirements for water releases?

ANSWER: In addition to the two powerhouses at Englebright, there are three other projects in three other areas that are going to be impacted. One is Colgate, which is a 350 megawatt powerhouse owned by Yuba County Water Agency that is immediately upstream on the north fork.

To the extent that we introduce anadromous fish up in the north fork above Englebright (however we get them there) it will effect Colgate.

Colgate currently operates as a dynamic operating facility. When people turn their lights on and off, that plant adjusts load up and down to accommodate the need. That results in fairly erratic levels in the river in that stretch. To the extent that additional water is necessary from the middle and the south fork to support these populations, that would lessen the diversions that are going over into Nevada and Placer Counties. It would have lesser impacts on the generation for those Nevada Irrigation District's project which is about 80 megawatts and PG&E's project which is about 245 megawatts.

QUESTION: I got the impression from the presentation that there would be a focus on the affect of providing in stream flow for streams that currently are not getting enough stream flow to sustain fish habitat. Is that correct, or are there other actions that would impact water supply.

ANSWER: The study will focus primarily on the middle and south forks of the Yuba River and to a smaller extent on the north fork of the Yuba River. The in stream flow releases that would be necessary to sustain those populations will lessen diversions out of the basin that's used for water supply in Nevada and Placer Counties. It may have some impacts on the water supplies in Yuba County. The only other thing that I can think of is it might affect stream flow temperatures. The flows necessary to sustain proper temperatures may be inadequate.

QUESTION: There is currently a disproportionate representation on the Workgroup of Sierra Club, Friends of the River and SYRCL. What is going to be done to provide more representation by property owners, houseboaters, campers and other users of the lake? This group is making recommendations as the project progresses. I do think it is important to have a balance representation.

QUESTION: Can you address an apparent disproportionate representation maybe because of the number of people from Sierra Club, Friends of the River, and SYRCL?

ANSWER: I believe there are five Workgroup members representing water agencies and Supervisors of Yuba county.

ANSWER: This is one of those questions that has no good answer and no right answer and no wrong answer. When we started these teams, we found out we were breaking new ground. First we had this whole list of names. There were different people and interests and how we are going to adequately represent each one was difficult.

We learned something valuable from Olivehurst and Penn Valley. We learned that putting 400 people in a room doesn't work very well

because not much happens. Everyone gets to vent and that's a good thing. However, we also learned that we had to move forward and we learned that CALFED didn't have a lot of experience at this much to our surprise. We said what should we do and they said, we've tried all these things. So we created workgroups, teams, and rules and some parameters for how we would conduct our business. These things are a work in progress. They resulted in parity, and a way to achieve consensus. We were able to develop our definition of consensus, and what to do if consensus could not be reached. We essentially developed a method of voting in the cases when consensus was unachievable. The Agency Team does not vote, and the Lake and River Teams have 11 people each who can vote. Six members from each team must vote for an item to get it passed.

QUESTION: You mentioned the method of determining representation was a work in progress. After the Penn Valley meeting, a representative from the Houseboat and Boat Owners Association was assured that the organization would have a representative on a working group. Why did our group not get selected? Why doesn't the Englebright Houseboat and Boat Owners Association have a representative, when other organizations like the Sierra Club, USGS, and Forest Service have two or three representatives?

ANSWER: I can only address that answer as it relates to my team. Please notice that the primary representation shows that there are no duplicates. One of the most difficult choices for my team (from my point of view) was to choose my supervisor from Nevada County. My supervisor happens to be of a different political party than I am, and of a different political persuasion than I am. She and I don't agree on a lot of things, though we respect each other. Reality said you must have her there and also you can't exclude elected people from Sutter or Yuba county either. So our team effort was to form a base team and then to add representation using the list we were given after the Penn Valley meeting. We tried to develop a manageable Team, and so we decided on 11 members. Does that mean that some people are excluded? Absolutely. Is it by design or on purpose? No. I think everybody is represented though maybe not directly by name. The example I want to give – whoever wrote the Englebright Houseboat Owners Association is that I wouldn't be there without you. So therefore, of course I represent you.

ANSWER: Since we have had this question more than once, it is obvious that the issue or representation is extremely important. We will probably have it again and I think it will come up through the life of the program. Anybody who feels they are not represented is going to present that question at some time. We are all going to have to look at it. We are going to have to look at it in more ways than one. Let us learn as we

grow, let us continue to make this process work and you keep giving us input.

QUESTION: Please describe how fire fighting contributes to flood control?

ANSWER: Well, I think the connection there was that on the flood control slide, fire fighting was shown as a current use of lake water and would need to be quantified. Apparently water is taken by fire fighting helicopters using buckets. If the lake wasn't there they wouldn't be able to dip into that location. So that's one of the main factors in quantifying the benefits of fire fighting.

QUESTION: Why are study options mentioned that do not relate to the study purpose? What are options in combination with others, please describe what options lowering the dam would be combined with?

ANSWER: We are trying to put together something more than just existing conditions. We had to look at a range of things for comparison. Certainly a no action alternative would be evaluated to come up with environmental, social, and economic costs to maintain what was there. When we start talking about what we need to change the operation of the dam, or what we need to restore habitat or consider down stream flood control we had to have a variety of options. It is for comparative purposes.

QUESTION: Will the value of the sport fishing and commercial fishing industries, be considered as part of the economic baseline? Will the impact to these industries be considered if the re-introduction of salmon and steelhead is not implemented due to concerns about private property, local businesses or hydro-electric generation?

ANSWER: Well, they have to be considered and that's the reason we are here to look at the contribution that restoration of steelhead and spring run Chinook salmon would have on a regional and state basis. We all know the spring run Chinook salmon was listed yesterday as a threatened species. So, in terms of sport fishing, there is a healthy sport fishing concern below the dam right now.

We will have to look at current conditions. What we could do below the dam to maintain the type of habitat and the fisheries that we have there now. The endangered species act, may preclude some sport fishing. We don't know what kind of baggage will come along with the fish so that is something that will have to be looked at in terms options. This is going to be a research population.

QUESTION: I think the question is, "in establishing the economic baseline and threshold, will the economic value of the sport fishing and commercial fishing industries will be considered?"

ANSWER: I would think so. In our newsletter, under the section additional comments we recognize the statewide economic effect of not restoring the fish. So our group discussed it and we agreed it will be done. One of the problems we had is that we really had a diverse group of people that knew what some of the economic issues are, but we didn't have an economist on board to help us flesh it out. That is what the next phase will be about. We need in phase II to bring an economist in and help us go over these issues so we can get a better definition of exactly what we need to study.

QUESTION: Will property owners and business owners be compensated if the dam is removed or if a dry dam option is chosen? How will they be compensated?

ANSWER: That is a big question that we are obviously concerned about. My understanding is that CALFED has stated that they will pay on their current assessed value of the property. If you bought 15 or 20 years ago, the assessed value after Prop 13, hasn't risen very much. The appraised value, the market value today can be a lot different than your assessed value. That will have to be something that will be looked at by the economist to make sure that it is a fair deal. Part of our consolidated Workgroup effort is to make sure everyone is left whole somehow. I'm not sure how we will accomplish all that, but that's the intent is to make sure there is adequate compensation down the road.

QUESTION: Will there be an effort to identify the true costs and benefits of recreational use of Englebright lake?

ANSWER: Yes. Did you like that one? Short, sweet, and directly to the point. In all of these issue areas the Workgroup expressed a great concern about people being made whole. There is also discussion that we don't know how to define about other more subjective values.

QUESTION: In the Key Issues and Concerns box on page 4 (of the Newsletter), why is recreation a subset of economics? Isn't this an example of the lack of awareness of the importance of recreation to the recreationist within the Bay Delta?

ANSWER: I've heard this question before. One of the things I did after hearing this question, is read the Newsletter from cover to cover word by word. Recreation is mentioned twice. So is power generation. I think the issue here in presenting this is not to be totally definitive nor exclusive but to

be inclusive and give everybody an idea of the parameters and scope of potential studies. To me recreation is what I do for a living and what I do for pleasure. I just got appointed to a board, and my wife had to fill out a form as part of the appointment. It asked a variety of questions about myself and my interests. One of the questions asked was what I did for pleasure. So I listed: Number 1 boating; Number 2 riding Harleys; Number 3 using an RV. Yes, I guess recreation is in fact my hobby. So from my perspective, recreation will not be excluded.

QUESTION: Regarding the studies of economic benefits & losses. Will an agency investigate the economic advantages of restoration?

ANSWER: Yes, absolutely. We are not going to study only the negative effects of potential restoration. We recognize there are very valuable economic effects as a result of recreational fishing. Every rural community in the country would like to have a free flowing trout stream near it. How you put a dollar on it is another question.

One of the interesting things in all of these issues is that depending on the grading system that you choose, there is a cost, and in every cost there is a benefit in most cases. Certainly this is one of them. Certainly there is a cost to the taxpayers of simply restoring habitat, but there could also be a benefit to the taxpayers as well. This is a very complex issue.

QUESTION: How will the economic loss to boaters be quantified? How will boaters be compensated? After an oil spill, the economic damages to boaters are calculated for the loss of boating days and compensation is extracted from that. Will something like this be done at Englebright?

ANSWER: We will probably use that process. I'm sure there's been precedents set elsewhere on how to calculate that. I don't have the expertise to do that but we will find someone who will do that and look at historical transactions and use that as a baseline for determining the correct values.

That's why at this process we are getting the experts on board to make sure we can adequately analyze these factors.

QUESTION: How does the State and Federal Environmental Species Act decisions regarding Chinook fall run and spring run and steelhead affect the upgrading of the river?

ANSWER: It doesn't affect our study. Our study was designed to evaluate the feasibility or desirability of introducing spring run Chinook and steelhead primarily because they were already on the state and federal

endangered species. One of our goals is continued recovery of the listed species in terms of improving ecological health. This goal can be integrated with CALFED's other purposes such as improving water supply and reliability. If anything it could add extra emphasis to make sure that we do these evaluations properly. Certainly there are some strings that come along with endangered species. We are not going to bring anybody from the Fish and Wildlife Service to answer this question tonight. Certainly the Fish & Wildlife Service has entered into section 7 classification under the Federal Endangered Species Act, as well as FERC on the operation of hydro appliances in the Yuba basin primarily focused at the time of steelhead run. This authority will probably be expanded to consider issues related to the spring run Chinook salmon. Certainly there are legal ramifications associated with these listings, but in terms of the study, we already began the study with the understanding that we were dealing with the state and/or federal ESA. That was the real emphasis of why we came up with this initial recommendation to look at the feasibility of habitat restoration several years ago.

In fact, some of us assumed that spring run would indeed be listed on the Federal endangered species list. We were kind of anticipating this a couple years ago.

QUESTION: CALFED knew that under the Integrated Storage Investigations, task for 1999/2000, was identifying and prioritizing fish spawning barriers for possible modification or removal. This task will be conducted parallel to the Upper Yuba River Study process. What does this mean and is it not counterproductive until the other Yuba River study is complete. How can these conclusions be reached?

ANSWER: Recently CALFED received funding for the Integrated Storage Investigations for the purpose of helping CALFED further define the 12 reservoir sites that CALFED is about to identify in its documents. In addition to early evaluations on new reservoirs, there was a 5th element in the Integrated Storage Investigation that dealt with fish spawning barriers within California, particularly within the Central Valley there are a large number of small to medium sized barriers to fish passage and the purpose of the ISI is to at least catalog and identify where all these potential barriers are. Those barriers are not going to go through the level of detail that will be going on with Englebright. In fact the upper Yuba studies program was kind of ahead of the curve and it began just prior the passage of the ISI – so they are compatible but they are very different. I think we put together a very preliminary list and had about 50 or 55 areas that had small to medium sized barriers to fish. These would be further identified and developed by the ISI program.

QUESTION: In the key issues of concern box on page 4 in the newsletter is a concern that fishing is recreation.

ANSWER: Fishing is part of recreation. We didn't say boating, we didn't say swimming, and we didn't say houseboating, we didn't say kayaking and we didn't say fishing. We said recreation. And it is my understanding that recreation includes fishing.

Under the economic benefits you have X number of people fishing in an area so fishing is included.

Under economics you will find two places where it is statewide economic effects of restoring fish. There are two types of fishing. Fishing locally in the Yuba River where we've experienced an economic benefit. There are also offshore fishermen, and they would be covered under economics as well.

I think this could also include fishing in the lake itself.

QUESTION: The emphasis for the study is expressly the Upper Yuba River, the south fork. There is attention given to the Lower Yuba River as well. Why is there no apparent interest in the rich, marvelous ecosystem of the reservoir in between the upper and lower Yuba Rivers?

ANSWER: Well, I don't agree with the question because I think the lake is covered. I think that we couldn't put out a newsletter and define every possible thing that might happen, because if it did it would take a truck to deliver each one. There is no one in this room or in the Workgroup that is making any attempt to exclude anything. We are using the word inclusionary, not exclusionary.

Also, Terry at last weeks meeting you did point out one of the bullets which looked at the habitat around and in the lake.

By our definition, upstream habitat is the area immediately upstream from Englebright including Englebright reservoir. We agree the fishing there is primarily an introduced species and it is a very important component on the Yuba River. It is part of the fish studies and evaluations and it is really there with the direct economic benefits analysis. So we are considering the lake in the habitat section.

QUESTION: What are the estimates of the potential restored abundance of salmon and steelhead resulting from the decommissioning of Englebright Dam? Can you provide some very rough estimates or ranges? What about current estimates of the potential restored abundance of salmon and steelhead.

ANSWER: This is a question that has come up before and I think it is a very good one that we don't have an adequate response for. Very soon we need to look at miles of habitat and come up with some sort of multiplier. Then we can say that if indeed these fish could occupy these habitats that there would be a medium to large number of fish there. What we really need to do is identify if there is enough suitable habitat. A related question that has come up is what are the recovery goals for State or Federally protected species. We certainly have some goals established for various stocks and populations of Chinook salmon. I don't think at this time we have developed a very quantifiable recovery goal for Chinook salmon in the Yuba. In the spring run we have an idea what a minimum population size would be and we have an idea of how many years it would take to achieve that. We don't have good goals for trout right now – we have a very large goal for the Sacramento Valley but we don't know – we haven't broken out what the component would be for steelhead. I think that is something where the Workgroup can bring in some technical experts from the agency who have a good handle on recovery efforts and recovery goals to help define exactly where we are headed on the Yuba River if indeed we decide to do it. It would be worthwhile to try to set some bounds as to where we think we are headed.

QUESTION: How well does the Yuba River currently serve as a spawning ground for the fall run salmon and why?

ANSWER: In recent years the Yuba River has been a very consistent and very productive river for fall Chinook salmon. Some of the nearby creeks have had more fluctuations, but the Yuba River population has been pretty stable. I think a lot of that is the result of water management operations on the Yuba River and trying to control the water temperatures to the degree possible. Still, we have a lower Yuba River technical working group that is continuing to look at problems and habitat restoration opportunities on the lower river. The idea is that there are a lot of things on the lower river that could be improved to increase capacity for a variety of fish.

QUESTION: What is being done to protect the fish from seals, foreign commercial over fishing or domestic commercial over fishing?

ANSWER: I think salmon fishing along the west coast particularly along California is one of the most intensively managed fisheries in the U.S. There has been a lot of constraints put on commercial fishing as a result of the listing of Chinook salmon and additional listings of spring run Chinook salmon. Certainly, the Marine Mammal Protection Act has lead to an increased number of seals and sea lions along the Pacific Coast and

indeed they do like to eat salmon, particularly when they are at the end of a fishermen's hook. I'm not sure if there are any patrol measures to alleviate that and I'm not sure how serious of a problem it is.

To my knowledge foreign fishing plays a very minimal impact on California Chinook stocks. So I'm not sure that it is a very serious consideration. Maybe during the break some representatives of PPCFA that are here tonight may have additional insight into those issues.

QUESTION: If there was a waterfall before the dam was erected and it kept the fish from going up the river, why is this considered native habitat?

ANSWER: We did talk about this and it kind of ties in with where the fish were prior to the dam, we don't have the records first of all, so it is not a very productive avenue to go down. What we are trying to do is increase the number of fish. We are not trying to resurrect a past population to make some sort of living museum. We are just trying to get the greatest number of fish. We want to see what habitat is available. What could be restored, realistically, and the question of artificial barriers comes up. I think we need to look at whether we want to modify a natural barrier, which upsets some people, but we did recognize that that is a possibility. So I think if we keep our eye on the goal to introduce the fish to the upper Yuba with the intent of trying to increase overall populations rather than resurrect some historical population it will answer some of those questions. Where it takes us, I don't know. It is kind of an overall philosophy at this point.

Again, I would remind everybody that we don't have an identified project. We are in the preliminary phase of trying to get a better description of habitat conditions on the upper Yuba and Englebright and other issues. Not until we got out and do the on-site field surveys to look for barriers and to evaluate the tributary habitats, water temperatures and passage flows will we have an idea as to whether there's any feasibility to move forward or not.

QUESTION: Do people understand that the modest quantity of water impounded by Englebright Dam could be used once ever by the destruction of that dam? Like any other dam thereafter, the flood protection and flow regulation of the lower Yuba, which is so important to the recovery of that fish area would be gone. Would that be beneficial? Is a natural pattern a winter floods and summer trickles, what dam busters actually want?

ANSWER: Certainly from CALFED's perspective we are not dam busters. We are trying to determine whether there is a potential to consider ecosystem restoration on the Yuba. Certainly issues related to the role of Englebright and flood control are still a question and something we

could get a better understanding of. We realize that the way the system is operated currently and the fact that there is a minimal temperature control opportunity at Englebright, and fairly controllable flows, that contribute to maintaining the fall running of salmon. I think one of the issues we identified is that in the absence of an Englebright dam, do we lose temperature control on the lower Yuba River and what are we going to do to the existing and very abundant population of fall run Chinook salmon. These are some of the reasons that we need to do the feasibility studies together with gathering additional information, so we can come to an assessment of some of these items.

ANSWER: Representing the fishing and environmental community, I can attest that CALFED is not a dam buster. I would also say that I don't believe that any groups represented on the Upper Yuba River Studies Program on the River Team have taken an official position on removal or decommissioning the dam. I can only speak for SYRCL, we don't have a position on decommissioning. So our position matches the position of NID, PGE and Yuba County Water Agency which is that these things deserve study.

QUESTION: I have 12 questions regarding process. Probably a good portion of them will go to Terry. I would like to spread some of them out but I think a couple of people could also answer questions. And I would ask as well that you try to keep your responses relatively concise.

If the answer to the study purpose is "yes", then what?

ANSWER: The intent of the Workgroup, when we get to the end of phase two or phase three, is to see if there is a project. If there is, this group will make a recommendation to the CALFED Policy Group. That would define whether or not we believe there is a viable project that could be further developed and that would trigger, this is really hypothetical and I'm uncomfortable doing it, an assessment of the cost of the recommendation. We would be able to tell the CALFED Policy Group that this is our recommendation and this is what it would cost to move forward. That would trigger a more formal environmental review and more detailed analysis of the economic impacts and it would begin the formal CEQA process.

QUESTION: Is it a proposal to tear down Englebright dam, a 'major federal action' within the meaning of NEPA, which is the National Environmental Policy Act, for a project having a significant effect on the environment within the meaning of CEQA, which is the California Environmental Quality Act, requires that an EIR/EIS be prepared by CALFED if this program is to move forward? Who would certify that EIR and EIS for CEQA and NEPA process?

ANSWER: I think that was a topic that was overwhelmingly discussed at our Workgroup meetings. One of the things you need to realize is that we are in a very preliminary phase here, and CALFED, which is just a consortium of federal and state agencies, would need to know whether they want to come up with some kind of proposed action. I think Terry, Dave and Shawn have tried to make it very clear that we don't have a proposed action yet. No one knows what needs to be done and before someone comes up with a proposed action, you need to study the six issue areas that have been discussed. Now if it comes forward that some action needs to be taken, those are the options, no action, decommissioning, going around Englebright, drawing down Englebright, putting fish ladders and all sorts of things. Yes, Englebright is an Army Corps of Engineers dam and reservoir. The powerhouses are PG&E and Yuba County Water Agency. There would be some kind of NEPA/CEQA activity. At this point in time, I don't think anyone actually knows who would be the Federal certifying agency if you were going to do something physically to Englebright Dam.

ANSWER: I wanted to add a little bit on that. Part of the assumption of where we are going with the studies and process is that we didn't want to get out 18 months or 2 years with a study on habitat showing that there is habitat up there. Not that there is or isn't though you could probably assume that there is habitat up there. So if there is going to be habitat up there, we want to do a parallel process of looking at some of the key issues. Then when we present this information to the Ecosystem Management Team at CALFED they can make a decision on what they want to do. If they want to have a state agency sponsor an Environmental Impact Report, or they want the Forest Service to do one for NEPA, that would be the time that one would be done. We didn't want to get out 18 months and not have any of the issues to evaluate in terms of quality, habitat etc.

QUESTION: Why was decommissioning Englebright mentioned in the first CALFED document referenced by Shawn? Who authorized that?

ANSWER: The CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program plan has gone through a series of changes, all of which have been available for public review. I think it was the June 1997 version that contained decommissioning and we received zero agency or public comment on that particular item. So when we went to the public meetings in Olivehurst and Penn Valley we were in the process of revising the Ecosystem Restoration Program. We had just finished a public review period. It became very apparent that CALFED had mis-chosen its words on what it wanted to do. It was really poor judgement for CALFED to talk about decommissioning Englebright when our intent in terms of ecosystem restoration was to evaluate

whether it was feasible to introduce salmon above Englebright. So in the most current version of the ecosystem plan, it no longer says decommission Englebright. Instead it states that CALFED will conduct a cooperative feasibility study of introducing salmon and Steelhead to the Upper Yuba River watershed.

ANSWER: I want to jump in for a minute. It is always interesting to watch how these things evolve. Terry indicated that in a report dated on such and such a time on such a such a date, decommissioning was there. Well, if any of you have received CALFED's most recent library – the document was 37 pounds. Now, that is a public information document and that document certainly contains all of the words about everything you could ever find. I don't know who can read it but it is there. Then in comparison, we put out a 4 or 8 page newsletter, and we get comments about well, we didn't say enough. One of the most difficult things we have to do is to try and communicate information to everyone that everyone can and will read. So maybe we need to put out a 22-pound document next time so that we have enough words in it. But I certainly hope not.

QUESTION: What are other similar study programs being under taken by CALFED?

ANSWER: I mentioned earlier the Integrated Storage Investigations where we will be looking at an inventory of 50 to 55 additional small community site diversion structures. We may be also looking at (in terms of geographic scope) we'll be looking from the Merced River north including a lot of the small tributaries of the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys.

QUESTION: Why was Englebright Dam built in the first place? Was it not a good solution to an environmental disaster and would tearing it down be an environmental disaster?

ANSWER: I'm probably not the best one to answer but I'll take a stab at it. It was built in the 1940s, it was debris dam to stop hydraulic mining debris from coming down into the Sacramento. By that point, most of, if not all of the hydraulic mine activity had been outlawed.

QUESTION: Was it a good solution to an environmental disaster and would decommissioning it be an environmental disaster?

ANSWER: I guess that's the \$64,000 question. In looking at those kind of alternatives would determine whether or not it would be.

QUESTION: If the dam was completed in 1947, why has it taken 50 years to become a problem? Fishing is better in the river than it has ever been.

ANSWER: In the interim period steelhead, Chinook salmon have all plummeted. For example the winter run Chinook salmon went from 116,000 down to about 300 fish. All these species were abundant in the 1940s, 1950s and into the 60s. They certainly weren't a problem then. Now the fish are not the problem, it is the way we have manipulated the environment and contributed to their decline. It would be wrong to call it a fish problem because our ability to manage and provide a healthy ecosystem is the problem. That's what we are trying to counteract is to provide conditions not only on the Yuba River, but on the main stem of the Sacramento, the Feather, the Delta. We are trying to promote the conservation and restoration of these species. Certainly salmon and steelhead are a renewable resource. I think that has been witnessed in recent years by the fact that spring run Chinook salmon on Butte Creek went from years where there were zero fish, to last year when there was over 20,000 fish that returned. Much of this was a result of good water conditions, and the fact that we removed the barriers to fish migration, installed fish ladders. Certainly that is what we envision wherever we're looking, but right now we don't know if it is appropriate or desirable to try to introduce spring run Chinook and Steelhead on the Yuba.

QUESTION: What would be done to replace the lost resources that the dam provides, such as water storage, flood control, power generation, or silt control?

ANSWER: The simple answer is we don't know. We don't even know if it is necessary and that's part of what this preliminary studies are about.

QUESTION: Can you describe in greater detail the preliminary options that comprise the studies program?

ANSWER: Stand-alone options simply mean those things that won't be done in combination with other items. That's what stand-alone options mean and we don't know what they are necessarily. No action should be pretty self-explanatory – that's leaving everything just how it is. Decommissioning means taking the dam out. New or alternate channels, means fish transportation systems of some sort. Again, we don't know what they are. The options were used as a tool to try to define the parameters of the studies. The options aren't fixed in stone. Dry dam means punch a hole a bottom of it and it holds no water. We used options as a tool to try to define the study parameters. There's not much more clarity that we can lend to that. Essentially you see the extremes of options that could be discussed by the Workgroup. That is nothing or everything and something in between. They allow us to identify upstream habitat, downstream habitat, economics, sedimentation, flood control, water supply, as key areas of concern that had to be evaluated. I'm not sure, and of course the public may have input that would change it, but I'm not

sure that there could be an option added that would change the issues. If there is, it could be added in.

The only thing we need to emphasize is what Terry said earlier. Upstream habitat is everything from the dam upstream, and downstream habitat is everything from the dam downstream. That should pretty well explain it. If we didn't explain it properly, help us out because it would appear that we are having trouble with this issue.

QUESTION: Do you want to provide clarity as well to the two bottom options? What does it mean by options in combination?

ANSWER: I was hoping you would forget that. Fish ladders, lowering the dam. Well, that means changing the elevation of the dam. Changing the elevation maybe something that needs to be considered in conjunction with a fish ladder. It may not be possible to have a 280-foot fish ladder. The answer again is we don't know. We threw these out as tools to stimulate discussion and get to study areas.

I think it is important to note that most of these options, they may not be a full and complete list, but they bracket the impacts that we are looking at. For example, decommissioning – obviously that means that we have to deal with the full extent of removing Englebright Dam. What we are hoping to do is get a range of the options here and the cost of these impacts and benefits so we can understand for a preliminary screen of what we can do here. Everything else that we could think up falls somewhere in between.

QUESTION: CALFED's charter or objectives are the Delta and San Francisco bay. Therefore, it has a mandate to study the complete river system that feeds the Delta and the Bay. CALFED does not seem to be doing what it is supposed to do unless it broadens this study to include every dam, every river, in the entire system.

ANSWER: Basically CALFED's mission is to improve water supply reliability and ecosystem health. They seem to be very closely linked. To the degree we need to be modifying the existing system to increase ecological health, we feel very comfortable with that. We have a watershed program that is intended to provide water supply benefits, water quality and watershed health. In terms of the aquatic ecosystem, we are looking primarily at all the major dams and at a lot of the species. Certainly, it would be unreasonable to consider the removal of Shasta Dam or Oroville Dam because of the water supply ramifications. I think CALFED is still flexible on Englebright. The Yuba River is the only area where we actually have a serious study proposal to look above a certain dam as to whether removing the dam is feasible or not. It might give us an

indication as to whether we want to conduct similar efforts on any of the other medium sized dams in the system as well.

QUESTION: Will the people or organizations actually conducting the study be independent and unbiased or will the studies be done by Federal and State agencies that are members of CALFED and maybe or are obviously biased?

ANSWER: I'll speak to the U.S. Geological Survey's role in this process. One thing that USGS brings to the table is our unbiased approach. We are the only science agency in the Department of the Interior, and we make every effort to not get involved in politics or regulatory issues.

ANSWER: The Forest Service is involved in this obviously as you study the upper Yuba River, the major landowner is the U.S. Forest Service and the Tahoe National Forest. We actually have employed a number of studies already on the forest. Our goal isn't to be biased. I don't think the Forest Service has any concern one way or the other about introducing fisheries above Englebright. It will introduce fish onto our national forest so our regional forester will be interested in the results of the study. We want the most qualified people to work on the results. In some cases those are members of Federal agencies, and in some cases state people. In other cases there are contractors, engineering firms, consultants who are the most qualified persons. In phase 2 and phase 3 of this study, we are going to try to identify what work needs to be done and who is the most qualified person to do it. I don't think CALFED has any bias. That's why they want to do the study. No one has decided that removing Englebright is the way to go, they want the information to find out what action to follow.

QUESTION: I think there was quite a bit of discussion during one of the Workgroup meetings on conflict of interest can you elaborate a little bit on that?

ANSWER: CALFED has been very careful as they have gone through this process trying to determine who should do projects and what type of people should be involved in conflict of interest areas. That has actually been a very big topic of discussion in the Workgroup. There are strong legal considerations both federal and state on conflict of interest and keeping the process clean. We are advised by legal counsels from both the State and Federal agencies on what conflict of interest there might be and what we need to be aware of in order to avoid it. That's the other reason we have stakeholders, because we want this to be an open process. It is not just State and Federal agencies in a closed room making a decision. This is a really a good process that has stakeholder representation and none of the agencies complained very much when we were told we couldn't vote. This is a process that the stakeholders

need to have a very strong stake in. Most of the Federal agencies and State agencies that are involved, the people here consider themselves some sort of technical expert, whether it be recreational fisheries, water quality or whatever, just to provide information as needed or to provide references.

ANSWER: I think it is important to realize as we enter this next phase to select the people who will be doing the studies, the whole Workgroup will be involved in that (at least the Representatives of each Team). In other words the public would be involved and I would hope that you would have a lot to say as to who does the study. So, if it becomes an agency they'll know what the public is thinking. Let me tell you we have a healthy suspicion of agency professionals and consultants. I assure you that the public will have some input.

QUESTION: One question has come up at every meeting. Why is this process important?

ANSWER: This process is important for a variety of reasons. First, this is a very complicated process. Your being here is public. Us being involved is public. The other thing that is important about this process in my mind is that we all have access to the process, to the problem if there is one and to the solution. Now it came as a great surprise to CALFED when this Workgroup said we are going to continue to be involved and we are going to continue to evaluate and we are going to continue to participate. We don't just go to one meeting and go away. I think the commitment the Workgroup members have made, and the commitment you have made by coming here, and the commitment Terry has made to sometimes fight his superiors in CALFED, tells you that this is a process that is working. This is one of the few that is working. Most processes are still involved in political debate and bashing each other in the press. This process has gotten beyond that. We have respect for each other. We have good dialog. If you ask me if I want to talk about taking down the dam, I'll tell you of course I don't. That's an absurd statement to make. However, I recognize and I think everybody involved in this process recognizes, that if we take this opportunity to do a complete open scientific study and evaluation of what goes on in this watershed, we not only have an opportunity to look at our lives and the lives we affect that affect these processes in the future.

ANSWER: Nevada City was the best example of why this process is important. We had approximately 200 people in Nevada City. In comparison to the meeting in November in Olivehurst and Penn Valley, the meeting in Nevada City last week was remarkably different. The only thing that I could really say is that this is probably one of the most complicated issues that is being discussed in the State of California. It is not just a

local issue it is a statewide issue. It has to do with species extinction, and economics and the question we always get is how much the fish are worth. It has to do with all these difficult questions. In Nevada City we saw people who I could identify as being on different sides of the issue, actually sitting down together and not yelling. They were listening to what the studies were about, listening to each other's questions and hopefully coming away with a little more understanding that this is not dam busters versus something else. We are really all on the same side. Nobody wants to see salmon and steelhead go extinct. Nobody wants to see people lose the value of their home. So this is truly a historic effort and hopefully will continue to be able to find a win/win solutions.

ANSWER: CALFED's perspective is that this is also a very important process. Keep in mind that what we are dealing with here is a very emotional and controversial issue. CALFED is going to encounter many, many controversial issues as it moves forward. One of the keys to the CALFED process has been open communication and very active stakeholder participation. At one of our staff meetings at CALFED, I characterized our Workgroup by saying it is CALFED sponsored, but CALFED is not in control of this process. As I said earlier, there are 52 people involved in this. There is one full-time CALFED person involved in this process. CALFED has a responsibility to manage this process but in no means is CALFED in control of this. Shawn, Dave and I and all the stakeholders, everyone who has a voice in this, we control it. I'm not speaking as myself but as a member of a team. Within the agencies, these type of issues come up on a regular basis and it reached a very high level of interest in CALFED. There is enough interest at CALFED that the Policy Group has gone so far as to invite Dave and Shawn to one of their meetings. They will give them an update and their personal perspectives on how this process is working. So in the long term we have a process that has gotten this far and we are certainly hopeful that it will get us through to the end.

FACILITATOR: We really appreciate everyone staying quite a bit longer than we expected. We would really like to continue to invite you to participate in this process. There is a phone line, website, and you've got the information and materials. Stay in touch with us and stay informed. Please let anybody else know who wants to be a part of this process. Thank you very much for your time.

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